



Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

June 19, 1997

The Honorable Robert A. Underwood
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515-5301

Dear Congressman Underwood:

Secretary of Energy Federico F. Peña has asked me to respond to your letter of May 8, 1997, in which you requested that the Department of Energy (DOE) withhold the publication of a special Marshall Islands edition of the Health Physics Society Journal.

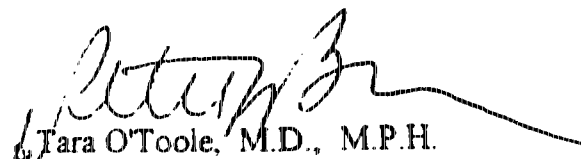
As you requested, I have reviewed the reasons for the Department's financial support of this special edition. The Department sponsors publications such as this in cases where the articles are directly relevant to areas of scientific inquiry for which DOE has responsibility. In this case, DOE sponsorship consists of contributing about \$15,000 toward publication of this edition of the journal. Since the journal is published by Health Physics Society, DOE has no direct authority to prevent its publication or alter its content.

In preparation of this edition of the journal, all selected articles were subject to a rigorous scientific peer review. DOE did not have a role in the conduct of the underlying research, the selection of articles, or in the peer review process.

The Department believes that publication of these peer-reviewed articles is consistent with the continuing effort for openness and public discussion of the U.S. Government's Marshall Islands policy. It would be inappropriate and contrary to DOE's efforts to make available all information related to the effects of radiation in the Republic of the Marshall Islands to withdraw support for dissemination of this information.

We consider DOE's scientific work in support of the Marshall Islands populations to be a critical function of this Department and look forward to working closely with you on these matters.

Sincerely,


Tara O'Toole, M.D., M.P.H.
Assistant Secretary
Environment, Safety and Health

